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ABSTRACT

In June 1986, 281 Miami-Dade Community College (MDCC) students rewrote one or more sections of the College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) because, with few exceptions, they did not pass on a previous administration. A study was conducted to investigate the performance of these students on the four CLAST subtests and to compare their performance with state norms. Study findings included the following: (1) both statewide and at MDCC, the essay subtest was the most commonly retaken, followed by the writing subtest; (2) 79% of the MDCC students retaking the writing test passed, as did 81% of those retaking the reading test, 47% of those retaking the essay test, and 64% of those retaking the computation test; (3) compared to statewide averages, MDCC students had higher passing rates in writing, similar passing rates in reading, and lower passing rates in computation and on the essay; and (4) the percentage of community college students passing the CLAST was consistently higher than that of State University students. (AAC)

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PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS RETAKING THE CLAST IN JUNE 1986

Research Report No. 86-29

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PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS RETAKING THE CLAST IN JUNE 1986

As the time since the implementation of the first set of CLAST cut scores lengthens, the number of students retaking the tests has continued to rise. In June of 1986, 281 students rewrote one or more sections of the test. Although students who pass are permitted to retake the test to improve their scores, almost without exception they were retaking the test because they did not meet the passing criterion on a previous administration.

Table 1 shows how Miami-Dade students performed when they retook each of the four subtests and compares their performance with that provided by the state. Both statewide and at Miami-Dade, more students retook the essay section of the examination than any other. In both cases, too, the second most popular section of the test to be retaken was the writing subtest. Compared to statewide passing rates, more Miami-Dade students passed writing (79% vs. 75%); in reading, the passing rate was similar (81%). On computation and the essay, slightly fewer Miami-Dade students passed than the statewide average. The essay had the lowest percentage of retakers passing with 49% statewide and about 47% at Miami-Dade.

At the bottom of Table 1, you will note that the percentage of community college students passing is consistently higher than at the State University System. It is impossible to know the exact reason for this difference, but one could speculate that it could be due to a combination of greater attention in preparing for the CLAST at the community college along with, perhaps, more "borderline" students than might be found in the SUS.

Table 2 displays the percentage passing each subtest at the Miami-Dade campuses. As shown by that table, North Campus students had the greatest success in retaking the reading test (70%) and the least success in rewriting the essay (44% passing). South Campus had most students passing the multiple-choice writing subtest (94%) and fewest passing the essay (49%). Wolfson had a very high passing rate on the writing subtest (93%), but like the other campuses, fewer than half (47%) passing the essay.

These results indicate that students retaking the CLAST stand a strong chance of passing the multiple-choice sections of the test. However, the required writing sample continues to give Miami-Dade students a great deal of difficulty.

Table 1

June 1986 CLAST
Percent Meeting 1984-86 Standards by Subtest
Retake Examinees in Public Institutions
And at Miami-Dade Community College

	Subtest							
	Reading		Computation		Writing		Essay	
	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent	Number Tested	Percent
All Examinees								
State	362	80.9	337	69.1	400	75.2	1,157	49.0
MDCC	77	80.5	36	64.0	89	78.7	212	46.7
Male Examinees								
State	188	78.7	101	69.3	241	73.9	679	48.2
MDCC	40	85.0	7	71.4	51	80.4	121	47.1
Female Examinees								
State	174	83.3	236	69.1	159	77.4	478	50.4
MDCC	37	75.7	29	62.1	38	76.3	91	46.2
White Examinees								
State	110	95.5	151	77.5	136	89.0	376	76.1
MDCC	13	84.6	6	66.7	13	92.3	27	70.4
Black Examinees								
State	87	65.5	103	52.4	82	57.3	186	45.2
MDCC	9	77.8	12	38.3	12	66.7	19	36.8
Hispanic Examinees								
State	40	87.5	39	74.4	59	84.7	139	43.2
MDCC	19	84.2	12	75.0	26	84.6	63	55.6
Asian Examinees								
State	17	76.5	5	60.0	8	37.5	38	23.7
MDCC	1	100.0	1	100.0	1	0.0	1	0.0
American Indian Examinees								
State	1	100.0	1	0.0	1	100.0	3	100.0
MDCC	1	100.0	0	- -	0	- -	1	100.0
Other, Incl. Foreign Nationals								
State	107	76.6	38	78.9	114	69.3	415	30.4
MDCC	34	76.5	5	100.0	37	75.7	101	36.6
State Universities	148	77.7	135	64.4	143	72.7	522	44.4
Community Colleges	214	83.2	202	72.3	257	76.7	635	52.9

Table 2

Percent Passing Each Subtest by Campus
June 1986 Miami-Dade Community College Retakes

	Subtest							
	Reading		Writing		Computation		Essay	
Campus	Number Tested	Percent Pass	Number Tested	Percent Pass	Number Tested	Percent Pass	Number Tested	Percent Pass
North	30	70.0	40	67.5	23	56.5	79	44.3
South	32	84.4	34	94.1	8	75.0	98	49.0
Wolfson	14	92.9	15	73.3	4	75.0	34	47.1
Total*	77	80.5	89	78.7	36	64.0	212	46.7

*Number may not add exactly because of the few students from Medical Center Campus.

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